To Turn and Love

Donald Green

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Blue Joy

Out of gray
sky.
came a bright blue
bird.
He sat upon my window sill
and for an instant-no
more than a ray of sun
in the whirl of time-we
stared at one another.

He then lifted his blue wings
and gently returned to the gray.

I combed my hair.
I brushed my teeth.
I dressed.
I then had my morning lemon
and went off to work.

And when the gray had
gone to yellow and from
yellow to a soft, mellow
brown, I gathered my
things and rushed home

I wanted to see if he had
come again with evening time

Why?

I could not really say

Perhaps, this is what
loneliness can come to

-Donald Green

Mechanizing

by Donald Green

It's raining. I don't walk in the rain anymore. So why should I walk in the rain and pretend to be blue. I'm not blue. But I am ..... More blue than what is possibly blue and time is catching up on me. Each day I get up and a sun-filled day isn't beautiful anymore. This scares me. If there's no beauty in a sun-filled day then I've lost Everything.

Now I find myself holding on- work is hard - planning Everything like an IBM computer.

People say I should be cold so I find myself striving to be cold. People say I should be calculating so i find myself counting fingers. People say I should be smart and so I've gone out and bought a truck load of think books.

Each day I feel myself growing- expanding -

Tomorrow I'll make it;
cold, calculated, hard but successful

OWN VOICE

By Donald Green

People's words directing me?
Or moving within

Am I vulnerable?
The whispers of people
The outward verbal attacks.

Do I walk with them or one of them?

Well I am not very young and should have myself by now.

So unless there's stuff going on inside of me I can't see.

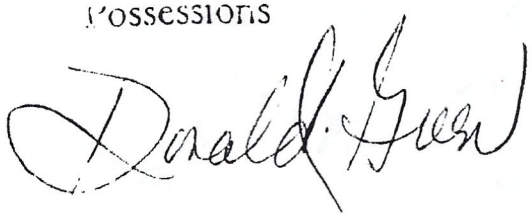
It looks to me I'm good prey
But why be good prey when I can love myself?

Far away I may have to go and once there, there's effort too.

But why be good prey?

I am a man and I can claim my right to be.

Possessions



As I learn, I wonder

Is it possible to go unclaimed?

As I stay in this life and watch

I get to wondering is it possible to go

Unclaimed?

For we have a self, someone who is us,

And it seems to me this self must be embraced,

If not, some force will do so,

As I get older and watch, I get to wondering

Can any self go unembraced,

As I grow older and see this life, I wonder

If there's any soul that will go

Unpossessed?

Quietly in a mirror

Quietly In A Mirror

by Donald Green

Quietly in a mirror like a crash
you feel yourself for what you are:
With friends, family, money, all that .... and no one
to hold your hand, kiss your lips, write you a poem.
You need love. Must have it - sadness burns inside
of you..... and now, where is the thing?
This thing? Oh to see your body aglow-eyes flashing, smile
broadening. But you go on- till you can't take anymore.
But you do. Take more, more and more. Until one day you
say to yourself "THIS IS THE END."
Time to let it out- to scream, to shout, to stomp.
But you hold on; close to madness.
Running to movies, walking to parks, to people.
Sitting.... watching..... dying....
Hoping for the eternal prayer- the endless dream

Then, there in someone's arms
finding the kisses, hugs, whispers,
All.
And then, the discovery:
YOU HAVE NEVER LOVED. YOU HAVE NEVER FELT. YOU DIED A LONG TIME

AGO.

To Be Strong
By Donald Green

In this world strength

The oppressions of society
Or some or for one
The contrary events or moments to scar
And bring fall strength is sail.....

S and love
That care for self and care for another
This can be castle
There can be power and freedom in love

But scarring and death can come

Strength to stand To cope
With responsibility..... the ability to confront adversary,
to cope with
Divisive inner forces
this thinking and physical substance is a gift for a labor of the two?
And one I must reach to
Deepening my will, Bringing to blossom
My tenderness

able to be

Moment
By Donald Green

To sit on the beach and measure you is
To move in music and candlelight

I Need Much More Courage

By Donald Green

How much dare for this life?

A lovers heart broken as a board over
knee

A walk along the earth can bring crevice
Or object or misstep
And injury

A flash of lightning can end your life

A dream can lead to wound and fall

Success can lead to wound and fall

So life is some DARE

Yes for the wind that denies
There's growing

Romance there is
Dream
Success
Family
Friend
Brother
Eyes for the sky
Flower
And Dog

So for the negative there is another Side

But for this place there is DARE

Now safety is not simply odorous
Protection with this
But how much without
Wound demise?

For this life For possible glory
It is courage,
Hope,

Faith and Knowing

Sunday Day

by Donald Green

There are two sides to my head.

One side is my positive it seems

That part of me that multiplies. that part

Of me that makes flowers. And there is another

Side, a negative that subtracts. that's curling

Scythe. Two parts of me, and the scythe side

Seems to win too much of the time. Negative

Thought bouncing, stalking flower. What am I to do?

Am I to sit down, and let my field go dry,

Or am I to fight? What do I need to save me?

A Doctor? A God? Me? This fight, this stalking

Alarms me? Scares? So what will I do?

Turn to God; that's what I'll do? To the God

Within..... The God beyond ?

That's what I'll do!

The scythe cannot win, there is the positive

There is a mighty field of flower,

I must be kind enough, willed enough, to turn

And love myself.

Our Source

by Donald Green

The stars have left the sky
And slowly we unwind with
The awakening city and
Prepare for a new day.

Lipstick, powder, eyeliner, purse,
Heels, simple pink dress, cereal
With strawberries on top for you-

Razor, lotion, comb, glasses,
Attache case, ivy blue suit
And newspaper with brown
Coffee for me-

And quietly, hand in hand,
With fresh memories evenly
Divided between us, we glide
Down old, rotting flights
Onto the awaiting pavement.

A beat or two, a few
Reluctant smiles,
And then the parting.

But you know as well as I
Do that we're still in the
Room we left up there.

My friend

By Donald Green

You are my friend
I see your eyes,
And when you have caused injury,
You ask my forgiveness... And when I have
You are forgiving...

With you my friend, there's walking, talking,
Laughing, and silence...Friend...
You are there to ring in the midnight hour,
You are there in the brightest moment...
You, you are the good to grace Earth

You A Friend

This Faith

by Donald Green

Perhaps everything that lives needs some faith;
the owl that sits with serious eye, the bird
that flies in air, the tree that spreads
its arm to the sky, perhaps all that lives
needs some faith?

But this I think is certain, man does;
each man, each woman that comes here must
have some degree of faith- to approach a day
requires some faith-enough thought or feeling
to stay on- perhaps it can be viewed as the work
of a mightier force, God or something fateful,
but whatever we say, to be here in this danger of
life, requires some faith.

SPECTACLE Fifty thousand people heard a New Age opera at the Pyramids in Giza, Egypt.

ENTERTAINMENT

Around the World, Ancient and Modern Creations

By BRUCE WEBER

Beneath the cacophony of exploding fireworks, there was music and dancing around the world on Friday night as entertainers of every stripe, and their fans, set about proving that it, if not eternal (who knows?), at least provides a worthy human tribute to the last, and the next, 1,000 years.

Yes, there was a disappointment here and there. The Javits Convention Center extravaganza in Manhattan, with the headliners Andrea Bocelli, Aretha Franklin and Sting, was cancelled, a casualty of poor ticket sales. And in Jerusalem, a performance of Handel's "Messiah" was cancelled as well, after a rabbinical ban on public celebrations that would violate the Sabbath.

But from the pyramids in Giza, Egypt, where the passage of a millennial moment is old hat (this is the third) and 50,000 people attended a new opera by Jean-Michel Jarre, a French composer of New Age electronic music; to the ancient temple of Angkor Wat, Cambodia, where traditional ballet dancers performed for the company of 2,000 prayer-offering Buddhist monks; to Rio de Janeiro, where three million samba dancers packed Copacabana Beach; to Berlin, where 60 bands played on 10 stages for a three-mile-long party that stretched across the once divided city; to Istanbul, where in Taksim Square, the Turkish band Athena packed the casbah; to Las Vegas, where Bette Midler and Barbra Streisand made diva lovers swoon, the new era clicked over to a sometimes hopeful, sometimes wistful but generally joyful noise.

In New York, where the 24-hour celebration in Times Square saluted the cultures of the world in hourly performances that reflected the year 2000's incremental arrival around the globe, Billy Joel, a hometown boy (well, O.K., a Long Island boy) rang in the occasion at Madison Square Garden with a nostalgic medley of his best-known pop ballads.

"I wrote this for my first ex-wife," said Mr. Joel, beginning a rendition of "Just the Way You Are." His show infused good times with wry melancholy, including a particularly yearning version of "New York State of Mind" and even the dolorous opening measures of Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata. The fans in the not-quite-full house did not seem to recognize the melancholy, but they took well and patiently; to every other they sang along.

The atmosphere of pleasant familiarity was repeated, albeit on a smaller scale, in myriad clubs around the city, as it doubtless was in cities everywhere.

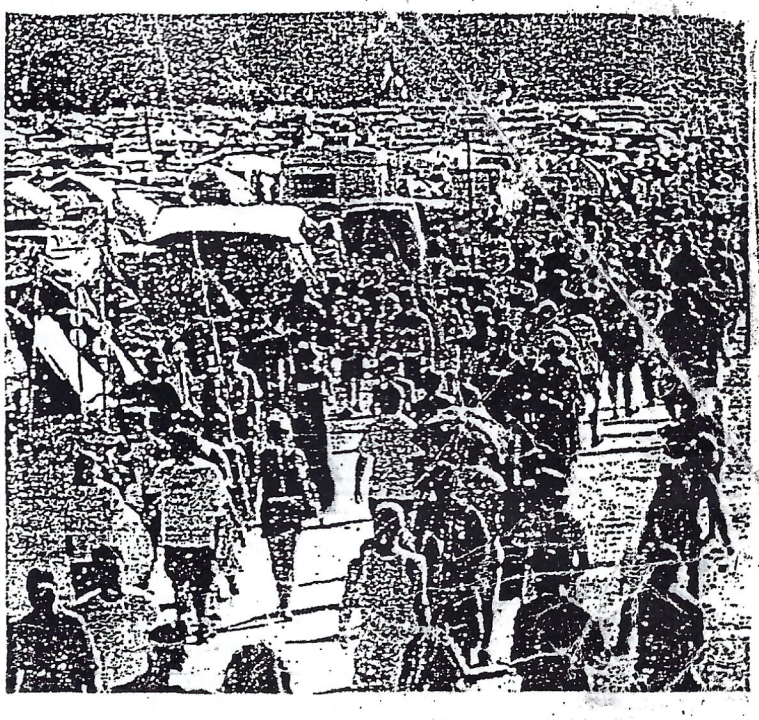
In Sunnyside, Queens, on a stretch of Queens Boulevard where halal meat markets, Turkish grocers and taquerias sit side by side and the newsstand sells papers in eight languages, Avenging Disco Godfather, a five-piece Celtic rock band, made its weekly appearance at Tailors Hall, in the one-room pub with a roaring fire and a candlelit chandelier. 75 regulars gathered for an Irish new year. The band covered classics by the Beatles and Janis Joplin with a lilting Irish skew.

Meanwhile, in the distinctly less intimate Florida Everglades, 80,000 people gathered for a midnight-to-dawn concert by the rock band Phish on 500 acres on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, home to a tribe that first had contact with European explorers half a millennium ago. Amid oak, cypress and palm trees, the party included hot-air balloons, two Ferris wheels and a ballet troupe, not to mention a handful of nudists and men on stilts. Many in the crowd had traveled from around the country to hear the band, which has achieved the kind of cult following that once adhered to the Grateful Dead.

Last summer, the city of Chicago commissioned a millennium line dance, the "milly," sort of a Midwestern macarena, from a local choreographer, Harrison McEldowney. Set to a tune by another Chicagoan, Wade Hubbard, it was danced just before midnight Friday by the 3,500 celebrants at the McCormick Place Lakeside Center for a dinner presided over by Mayor Richard M. Daley.

After the millennium turned, the milly gave way to a more conventional boogie — and in the end, a series of conga lines, with Maggie Daley, the mayor's wife, leading one.

In Las Vegas, in the 20th time zone to enter the new year, Barbra Streisand gave a rare performance at the MGM Grand, the same place she last appeared in six years ago, when the hotel opened. Then, an anxious Ms. Streisand took the stage for the first time in 20 years. This time, appearing confident and excited, she sang to a sold-out house of 13,000 people and repeatedly brought them to their feet during the two-and-a-half-hour show. They all carried flashlights they had been given as they entered — in case the power failed, which it didn't.



CULT FOLLOWING At the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation in the Florida Everglades, the rock band Phish played from midnight to dawn.

At the stroke of midnight, silver, white and gold confetti dropped in the arena as Ms. Streisand sang her final number — "People," of course.

Nowhere was there an extravaganza to match "The Twelve Dreams of the Sun," a three-hour song cycle staged as an opera, with more than 1,000 musicians, dancers and singers and based on an ancient Egyptian myth about the daily dusk-to-dawn journey of the sun and the gifts it bestows on humanity during its passage: time, protection, wisdom, eternity, fidelity, memory, courage, space, innocence, celebration, purity and freedom. The anthemic work by Mr. Jarre melded electronic music with Western jazz and Arabic rhythms and melodies, and the music and dancing was augmented by a spectacular laser show against the backdrop of the pyramids and the great Sahara.

"I hope the new millennium will witness international understanding," Mr. Jarre told the crowd. A sentiment grand and bland, perhaps, but appropriate, no? Somehow, everywhere, grand or grandiose, glorious or gloomy, maudlin or moving, artists rose to the occasion because they had helped define it. That was the case for the lonely practitioner as well as the celebrated star.

To wit: Not long before midnight Friday, Donald Green sat at a card table on West Third Street in Manhattan peddling his poems, as he has done almost daily over the last decade. He has bound some of his poems, handwritten, into a volume. He had only 13 of them; well, 12 now. Asked for a millennium poem, he chose "Hope," reprinted here for the first time:

Does life have within it the ability
to return?
The Earth offers flowers
The Earth greets the dead
The body still seed
So if the world through war
Was turned to debris
Can there be energy to settle on
space
And rise?
Now human life may be on other
planets
And life filled with humanity
But if there is war
Wouldn't it be great if we could
come again?

GOTHAM

Here is our poetry—*Ezra Pound*

Street

FOR A PUSHCART POET, DOWNTOWN IS GETTING VERSE AND VERSE

THREE OR FOUR NIGHTS A WEEK, Donald Green leaves his apartment in the Bronx and takes the subway into Manhattan. He does this in January and July, and most months in between, always carrying a small folding card table and an old plastic milk crate filled with papers and books. When he gets down to Greenwich Village, Green picks a spot on the sidewalk. In past years he favored a spot on Greenwich Avenue in sight of the old Jefferson Market jail, but lately he's drifted over to lower Broadway, a half-block up from Tower Records. During the daytime, this block is crowded with people selling old books and incense and earrings; but at night, only Donald Green is out here, and he sells nothing but his own literary passion.

Unfolding his table, Green empties his crate and sets up a hand-lettered sign the size and shape of an ironing board. It reads: A PUBLISHED POET SELLS HIS POEMS.

Green sells a self-published collection of his work, *Quietly in a Mirror*. The title poem begins: "Quietly in a mirror like a crash / you feel yourself for what you are: / With friends, family, money, all that . . . and no one / to hold your hand, kiss your lips, write you a poem."

There are ten poems in all, and Green sells the collection—some fifteen sheets of letter-size copy paper stapled together—for $5. His sign proclaims: MY POEMS HAVE APPEARED IN ANTHOLOGIES WITH POEMS BY ROBERT FROST, LANGSTON HUGHES, MAY SWENSON, GWENDOLYN BROOKS, and so on.

Green stays in his spot until he has sold all the copies he has with him, or until he feels it's time to go. He rarely folds up his table before midnight, because he is a tireless conversationalist and he loves talking with passersby and potential customers. His favorite subject is the world of letters. He likes nothing more than encouraging young and unpublished writers. He tells stories of the struggling poets and novelists he's met over the years, some of whom are now "making it." "Making it," to Donald Green, doesn't necessarily mean fame and fortune; it's enough to be published and have your work sold in bookstores. "Getting published is the key," he says, "that opens all the doors."

Donald Green is a small, thin man; in winter, his dark brown skin takes on a gray hue almost matching his overcoat. Even in summer he wears a sweater. He doesn't like to talk about his own life, except for his publications in mostly obscure literary journals and anthologies, some of which he carries with him, old and battered as they are.

Green hand-letters his covers in great flourishes with a black marker, and he autographs his collection with inspirational inscriptions: "May you prosper; if you believe, it shall be."

Green often says he is planning to put his table away for good, and occasionally he disappears from the neighborhood for weeks, even months at a time. Sometimes, he explains, he's too tired or too cold, and sometimes he's on the Upper West Side, where, he says, he has a steady, family-oriented clientele. But he always seems to end up back in the Village.

"There's a lot of walk-by traffic here," he says. "A lot of young people come by, late at night; a lot of them stop and talk. Sometimes they buy." He nervously asks the time. It's almost midnight; Tower is starting to cut off the lights. "It's good to talk," he says. "But I have to make money, too. That's why I'm here."

RICHARD RUBIN

Illustration by Scott Menchin.

Music

UNDERGROUND ALL-STARS FÊTE CLUMSY COHORT

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES CAN BE USEFUL, but sometimes it's even better to have them in low places. And when a dozen of underground New York's biggest stars gathered at Brownies on April 12 to give a benefit concert for Tom Clark, he got the best of both worlds. The night's four co-headliners—the Dictators, Patti Smith, Marshall Crenshaw, and Jim Carroll—effectively turned the event into a reunion of CBGB, Class of '78.

While home in DeKalb, Illinois, for his father's funeral in February, Clark—a lanky 31-year-old bartender whose band, the High Action Boys, is a longtime favorite of East Village cognoscenti—slipped lugging a table out of his family

Hear the Pulitzer Prize winning Novelist

Norman Mailer

in an interview www.drunkenboat.com

Spring 2004 Edition

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